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The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Letter dated 14 February 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a declaration by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on the situation in Syria, which was adopted on 10 February 2012 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session under agenda item 36, and as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

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Annex to the letter dated 14 February 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

Declaration by the State Duma on the situation in Syria

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation expresses its grave concern at the deteriorating situation regarding the Syrian Arab Republic, against a backdrop of escalating violence inside Syria itself.

During the voting in the United Nations Security Council on 4 February 2012 on a draft resolution on the situation in Syria presented by the delegations of Morocco and a number of Western and Arab States, the delegations of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China voted against the draft resolution, which in its current form is incapable of achieving the principal goal of ending the domestic conflict and restoring peace in Syria.

The Deputies of the State Duma note that the position of the Russian representatives to the United Nations is fully in line with that of the Russian leadership, which holds that the issues in Syria should be addressed through productive internal dialogue based on the mutual renunciation of violence by both sides.

The Deputies of the State Duma consider it extremely important that the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, should in no way adopt the position of either party to the conflict. An unbalanced approach, such as that set out in the previous draft resolution, would undermine any chance of achieving equitable and constructive dialogue.

As was borne out by the evolution of a similar situation concerning Libya, no provision of a document adopted by the United Nations should be interpreted as a reason or justification for the use of force by any State Member of the United Nations or of an inter-State organization without the explicit consent of the Security Council, nor should any Security Council resolution contain calls for a change of political regime or leaders, which is the unconditional prerogative of the peoples of sovereign States.

However, in the opinion of the Deputies of the State Duma, the scenarios proposed by a number of Western and Arab States seek something quite different from the United Nations and the international community as a whole. In fact, these scenarios prejudge the outcome of the political process in Syria, set ultimatums for one side alone, and see political regime change as an absolute prerequisite for resolving the issues in Syria.

The Deputies of the State Duma strongly condemn the practice of forcefully interfering in the affairs of other States and imposing solutions on them from outside. The Russian Federation cannot support any document that involves or permits such interference without an explicit mandate from the Security Council. Those States members of the Security Council that blame the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China for the escalation of the domestic conflict in Syria because they refused to support an unbalanced draft resolution on the situation

in Syria are deliberately misleading the international community about their own motives and intentions, as was the case with Libya.

The State Duma calls upon both parties to the domestic conflict to renounce the use of force, recognize their responsibility for the fate of the Syrian people and immediately commence work on reaching a mutually acceptable settlement through constructive dialogue. The Deputies of the State Duma also call upon the members of the League of Arab States (LAS) to continue actively participating in the internal settlement process based on the LAS initiative of 2 November 2011, extend its observer mission to the Syrian Arab Republic and encourage both parties to the conflict to engage in dialogue and renounce the use of force without any preconditions such as a demand for the resignation of the Syrian authorities.

The Deputies of the State Duma declare their support for the position taken by the Russian leadership in the international efforts to help address the domestic conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. The State Duma considers it advisable to continue clarifying that position and its practical implementation in conjunction with those States that share the Russian view as that which best responds to the interests of the Syrian people and of all those who seek to end the bloodshed and stabilize the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and in the region as a whole.

S. Y. **Naryshkin**
President of the State Duma of the
Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

Moscow
10 February 2012